GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW , JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2854
ANSWERED ON:21.03.2002
LEGAL RESTRICTION ON OWNERSHIP OF LAND
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Will the Minister of LAW , JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether lack of proper land records the inhibiting agricultural land is locked up in legal hassless over their ownership;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to hasten the process of removal of legal restrictions on the ownership of land; and

(c) whether there is any process initiated by the Government for early land reforms so that small and marginal farmers will be benefited from the clutches of the ease market?

Answer

MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE & COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY)

(a) to (c) The subject of land reforms is under the exclusive legislative and administrative jurisdiction of the States as provided under Entry 18 of List II (State List) of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. The Central Government, however, plays an advisory and coordinating role in this field. The laws covering various aspects of land reforms have been framed by almost all the States. The major components of the land reforms have been the abolition of zamindari and intermediary tenures, tenancy reforms ceiling on ownership of agricultural holdings, consolidation of holdings, distribution of ceiling surplus land / Government Wastelands including Bhoodan land to the landless rural poor, modernization and updating of land records system etc.

As a result of the implementation of various land reform programmes, the following achievements have been made so far:

- Intermediaries abolished on 15 million acres of land and ownership rights granted to 20 million tillers.

- An area of 5.30 million acres of ceiling surplus land has been distributed to 5.50 million rural poor.

- An area of 15.74 million acres of Government Wastelands and 2.17 million acres of Bhoodan land has also been distributed among the eligible rural poor.

- An area of 163.34 million acres has been consolidated in the country

- 12.42 million tenants have their rights protected over an area of 15.63 million acres of land

- 0.43 million acres of alienated land has been restored to Scheduled Tribes.

For improving the accessibility as well as maintenance and updation of land records, the Government of India has launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records which is on 50:50 sharing basis between the Central Government and the States. Since the inception of the scheme (1987-88), the Government of India has given a financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 220.60 crores to the States / UTs (upto 20.3.2002).

Another Central Sector Scheme with 100% financial assistance on Computerization of Land Records has been launched in the year 1988-89 so as to remove the problems inherent in the manual system of maintenance and updating of land records and to meet the requirements of various user groups. The main objective of the scheme is to provide computerized copies of ownership details of the record of rights at a reasonable price to the land owners. So far, 573 districts have been covered under this scheme, covering 2726 Taluks / Tehsils / Blocks. Since inception (1988-89) of the scheme, a total financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 233.32 crores has been provided to the States / UTs (upto 20.3.2002).

The basic thrust of the land reform programmes has been to minimize litigation and provide a tool in the form of computerized copy of record of rights in the hands of rural farmers. The States have also been advised to constitute Special Benches / Tribunals for expeditious disposal of land related cases pending in various High Courts.